



**Bull Run**  
TREATMENT  
PROJECTS

*Our water: Safe and abundant  
for generations to come*

PORTLAND WATER BUREAU

## Bull Run Treatment Program

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### Communications Strategies for Customers and Water Filtration Facility Neighbors

August 12, 2021



# Communications Framework

- Use public opinion to **set a baseline and evaluate progress**
- **Identify and evaluate**
  - Audiences
  - Opportunities
  - Challenges
- **Implement strategies and messaging**

# Polling Question #1

**How involved are you with project communications?**

- a) I regularly work with communications staff to develop strategies.
- b) I am the communications staff.
- c) I show up to meetings about communications when I have to.
- d) Why in the world would we want to talk about our projects?

# The Value of Strategic Communications



**Strong Communications =**  
Credibility & Trust

**Weak Communications =**  
Skepticism & Doubt

# Filtration Communications Goals

1. **Educate** to ensure our stakeholders have the information they need
2. **Engage** to identify critical issues and prepare effective strategies
3. **Share** our successes to build public trust and support over time



# Public Opinion Research

**1,653**  
customers  
queried  
through our  
online  
survey



Over  
**183,343**  
people reached  
through  
social media



932 followers



9,827 followers



170,412 followers



413 followers



1,843 followers

**20**   
stakeholder  
interviews

representing a range of  
stakeholder groups:

- Wholesale Customers
- Business/Institutional
- Residential
- Public Health Interests
- Minority Groups/Organizations
- Portland Stakeholders

# 2018 Online Survey

## Top Questions: Impact to Bills/Changes to Water

*Q: What questions do you have about the filtration facility?*

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How will it impact my bill?	78%
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Will I notice a change in my water?	70%
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Will the filtration plant impact the Bull Run watershed?	51%
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How does the treatment process work?	50%
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When will the new filtration plant be operational?	48%
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How are decisions being made?	47%
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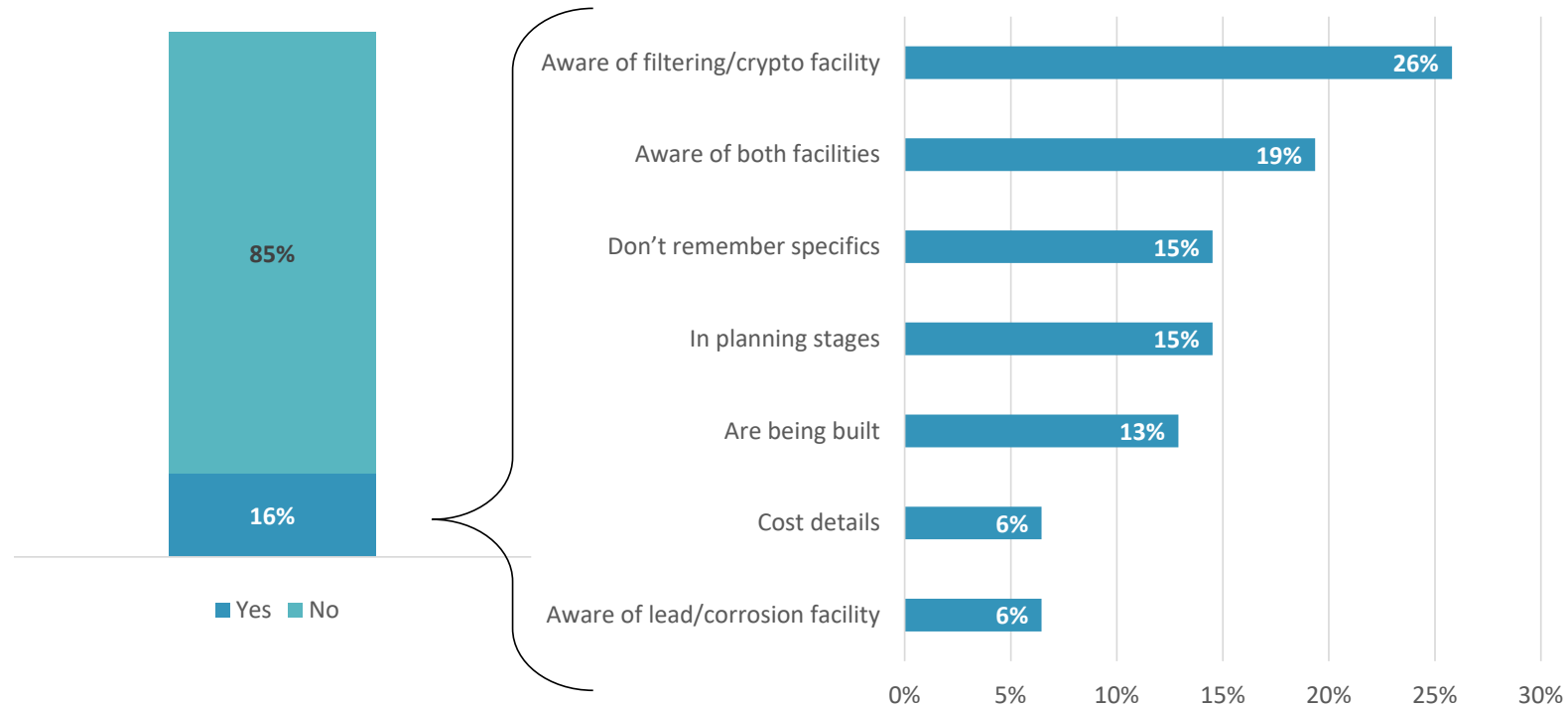
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How will PWB keep me updated?	38%
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# Have you heard anything about these new facilities?

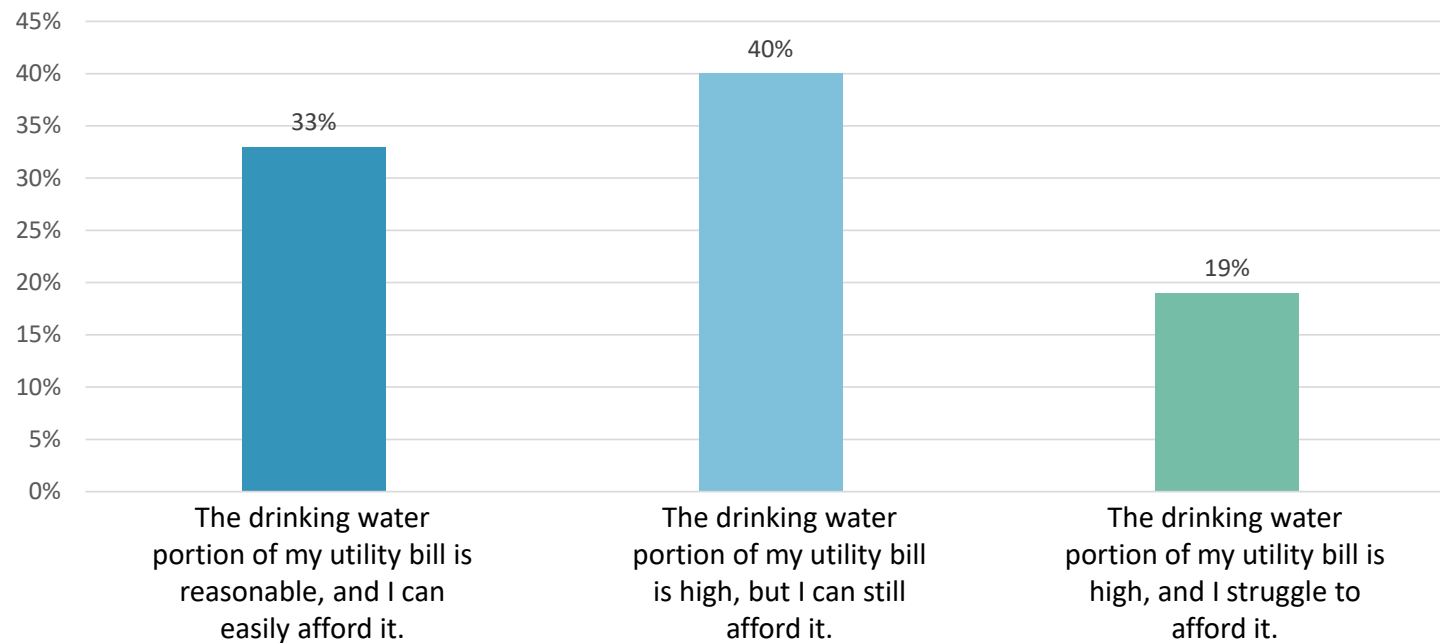
*All Respondents*



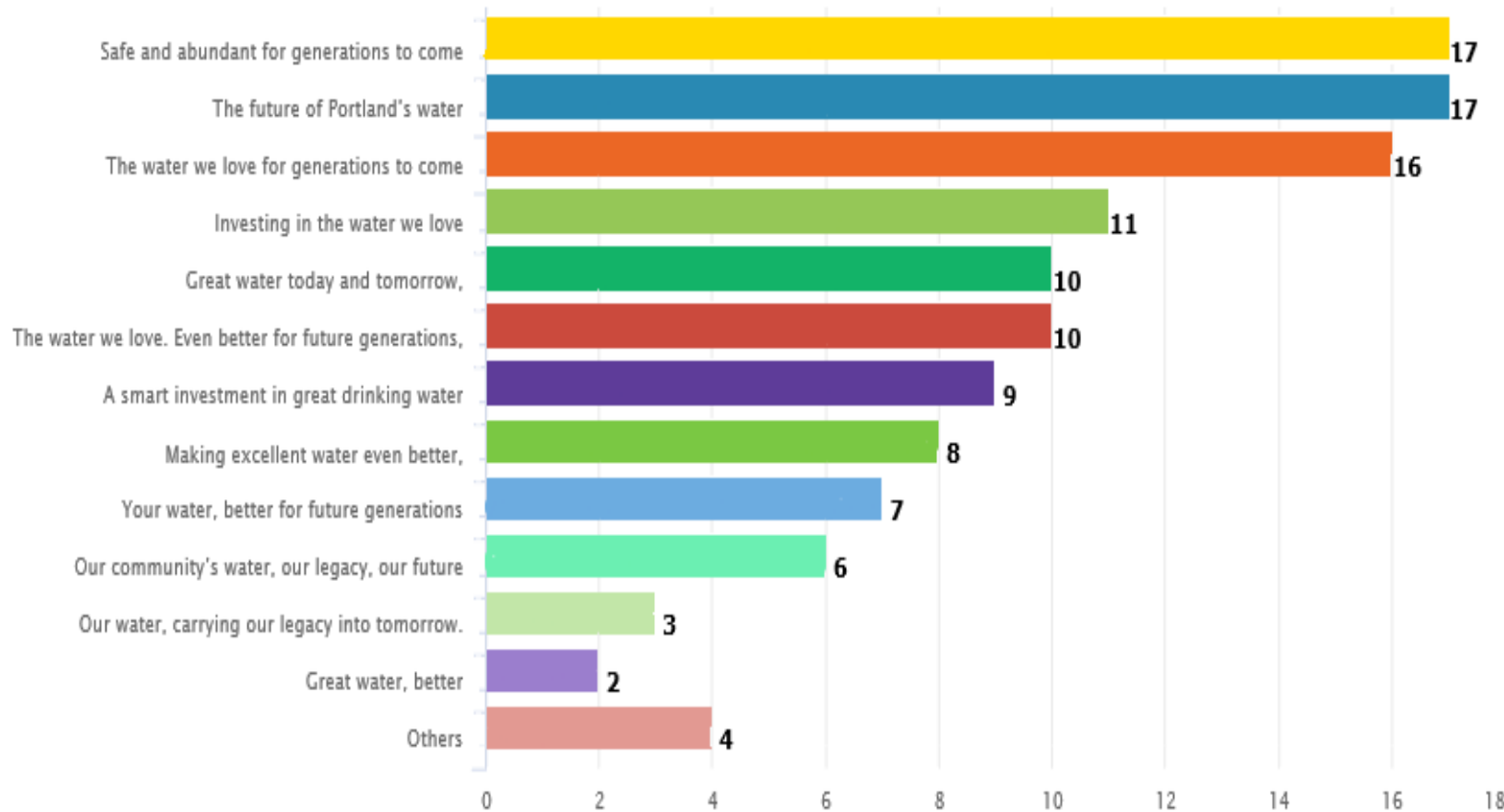


# Which of the following three statements comes closest to your point of view?

*All Respondents – 73% “Affordable”*



# Portland Water Bureau – Preferred Taglines



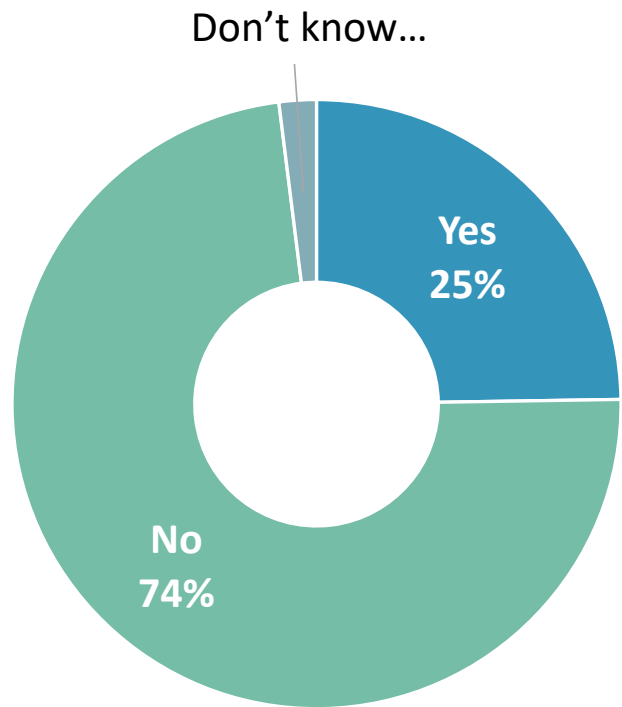
# Project decisions are guided by community values

Customers tell us they most value:

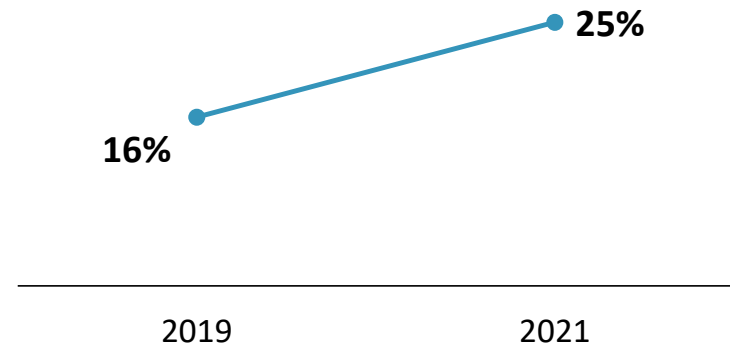
- **Water quality** and public health protection
- **Best value** for customers
- Minimizing **community impacts** to rural site neighbors
- **Reliable, consistent** water



# One in four Portlanders are aware of the projects, up from 16% in 2019

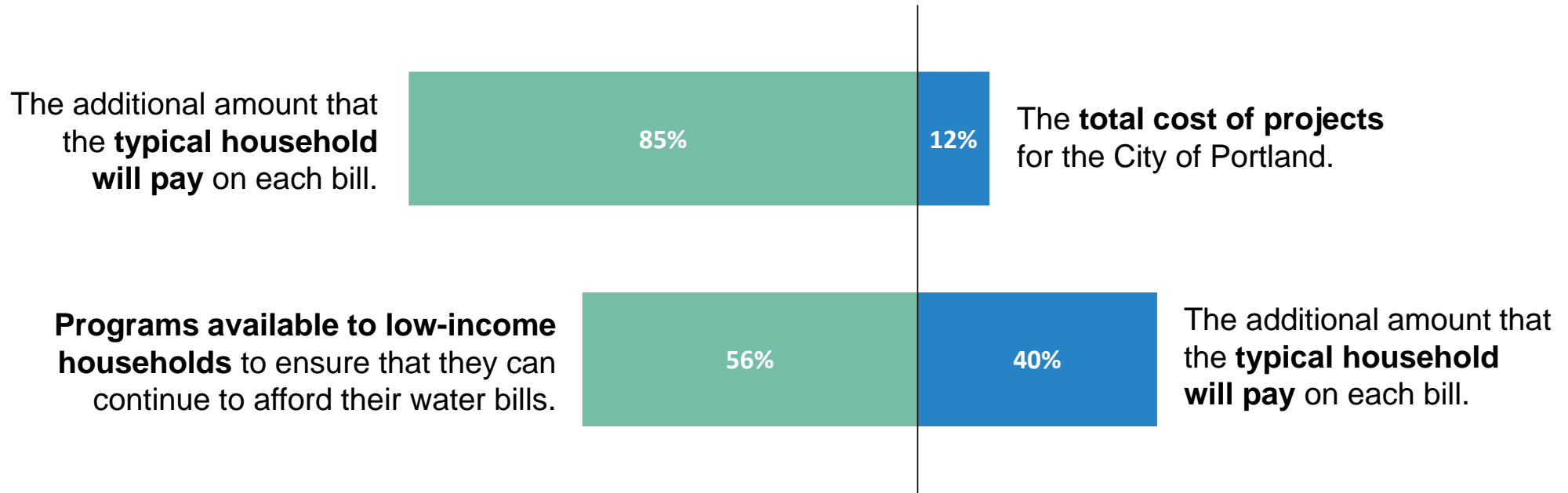


**Have heard or read about facilities?**



*Bull Run Treatment Projects Public Opinion Research (March 2021)*

# Portlanders are interested in typical household rates and low-income programs



*Bull Run Treatment Projects Public Opinion Research (March 2021)*

# Opportunities and Challenges



## Opportunities

The two projects provide PWB several opportunities to improve customers understanding of the water system and to improve and broaden relationships with stakeholders including the new water filtration plant site neighbors, sensitive user groups, underrepresented communities, and PWB staff. This communication framework will work to demonstrate to customers and stakeholders that these treatment projects are a beneficial, generational investment in water quality and reliability. Other opportunities and goals include:

- ✓ Projects are celebrated
- ✓ Increase positive customer engagement with the PWB
- ✓ Leverage the treatment project process to market PWB successes
- ✓ Increase understanding of PWB's water system
- ✓ Develop long-term positive relationship with water filtration plant site neighbors
- ✓ Build a strong two-way relationship with underrepresented communities
- ✓ For PWB staff, build pride and ownership in the new treatment systems
- ✓ Broaden communications with sensitive users
- ✓ Demonstrate PWB's commitment to public health protection (interim and long-term)

## Challenges

Coupled with opportunities are challenges. Big challenges include communicating about the changes to water quality from additional treatment and project costs and impacts on ratepayers. Other challenges described by PWB include:

- ✓ Changes in water quality or taste
- ✓ Costs, cost estimates, customer rate increases
- ✓ Explaining treatment process decisions that increase costs
- ✓ Explaining why corrosion control facility will be rebuilt at the water filtration plant site
- ✓ Communicating water quality risks prior to new systems being on-line
- ✓ Continued need to protect the watershed and provide a multibarrier approach to delivering safe drinking water

# Audience Mapping

Audience	Interests
<b>City Council/Commissioner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress updates</li> <li>• Outreach efforts</li> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Costs / Rates</li> </ul>
<b>Retail Customers</b> Includes residential (bill paying and non-bill paying) and commercial users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Cost and rates</li> <li>• Project progress</li> <li>• Public health</li> </ul>
<b>Wholesale Customers</b> Wholesale customers who purchase supply from PWB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholesale rates</li> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Some have a technical background and greater interest in the technical details</li> </ul>
<b>Water Filtration Plant Site and Conduit Route Neighbors</b> Neighbors who will be directly affected by construction activities, including properties along the Conduit 5 route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction impacts/mitigation</li> <li>• Impacts from long-term operations</li> <li>• Decision process</li> <li>• Viewshed</li> <li>• Property values</li> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Elk herd and other wildlife</li> </ul>
<b>PWB Employees</b> Includes all employees – staff are interested and often asked questions on the job and outside of work. Special focus on outreach and frontline staff who routinely interact with the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Project progress</li> <li>• Costs</li> </ul>
<b>Sensitive Users</b> Commercial users whose operations may be affected by changes in water chemistry such as food and beverage, high-tech and medical providers (dialysis, hospitals etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality – corrosion control treatment (may require their own capital improvements)</li> <li>• Rate increases, affordability, equitable allocation of costs, need to provide their own interim treatment for <i>Cryptosporidium</i> and turbidity</li> <li>• Impact on groundwater use</li> <li>• Impact of boil water notices</li> <li>• Public health (esp. medical)</li> <li>• Schedule (ICCT)</li> </ul>

Audience	Interests
<b>Low Income, Underrepresented Communities</b> Members of the community who have been historically underrepresented and lower income household that who will be most affected by required rate increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Rate increases, affordability, equitable allocation of costs</li> <li>• Economic opportunity</li> <li>• Public health</li> </ul>
<b>Large users</b> Customers who may be significantly impacted by rate changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rate increases</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerable Populations and Medical Providers</b> Populations thought to be more vulnerable to <i>Cryptosporidium</i> infection (HIV/AIDS, cancer patients, transplant recipients) and their medical providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health risk information</li> <li>• Water quality changes</li> <li>• Progress/schedule</li> </ul>
<b>Drinking Water Regulators</b> Oregon Health Authority and EPA, includes communications required under agreements for ICCT and Filtration projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with regulatory communication requirements—quarterly notice, vulnerable population outreach, lead brochure, and LCR exceedance efforts</li> <li>• Updates on major decisions, schedule</li> <li>• Public health</li> </ul>
<b>Other State, Federal and Local Agencies and Elected Officials</b> Examples include Multnomah/Clackamas/Washington County Public Health, BES, DEQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varies depending on agency</li> <li>• Public health</li> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Discharge issues</li> </ul>

# Implementation Approach

## 7. Implementation Approach

Implementing the communications plan will be a collaborative effort, calling on the expertise of PWB teams.

### Materials Development Guidelines

The following guidelines address key components of developing materials for the project audiences. These are drawn from *Guidelines for Creating Materials* (Rima E. Rudd Health Literacy Studies, [www.hsph.harvard.edu/health-literacy](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/health-literacy)) and closely match PWB's current standards.

#### Plain Language

- Simple, clear, conversational style.
- Present information in a logical order.

#### Organization

- Provide needed background information or needed context.
- Group information into meaningful sections with clear headings.
- Emphasize and summarize main points.
- Give attention to what people want to know as well as what professionals think they ought to know.

#### Style

- Use everyday words.
- Explain technical terms and use examples.
- Avoid long, complex sentences.
- Write in the active voice.
- Engage the reader: refer to a shared context or use a Q&A format.
- Link information to trusted sources.

#### Layout and design

- Include ample white space.
- Use readable font style and size.
- Signal main points with bold or highlights.
- Use charts, graphs, photos and illustrations.

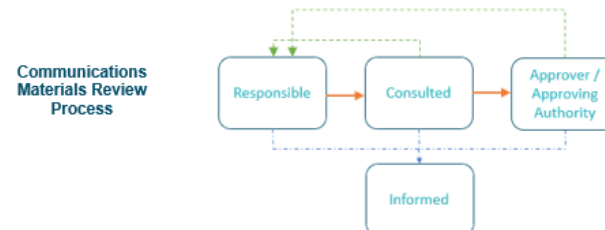


## Review Process

The following table provides a structure used by many organizations and government bureaus for reviewing communications materials. RACI (responsible, approver, consulted, and informed) is a project management tool used to assign and designate roles for staff by level of project involvement and responsibility. Defined as a best practice, it clarifies the participation by various roles in completing the communication materials review process. Materials routed for review and approval will be accompanied by a cover memo detailing the roles for each deliverable and where it is in the process.

Role	Description	Assignments
<b>Responsible</b>	Those who develop draft materials and then edit materials based on review comments	For each communications piece, a combination of PWB and consultant staff will be engaged as appropriate based on the topic.
<b>Approver / Approving Authority</b>	Those who provide final review and approval of the materials	The Communications Director fills the role of Approver for standard communication materials. The Filtration Executive Committee fills the role of Approving Authority for materials that have special significance or are outside the normal communications process. The Water Quality Manager has final approval on materials that involve water quality information. Regulatory communications are approved through the WQ Groups standard method.
<b>Consulted</b>	Those who serve as a primary contributor, reviewer, and first level approvers	Representatives from PWB Communications, Water Quality, and Engineering teams.
<b>Informed</b>	Those who are kept up-to-date on progress	The PWB Communications Director and PWB Deputy Director will be copied on distribution of draft materials.

The figure below shows the flow of the review process from responsible, approver/approving, authority and informed. The approver/approving authority will make edits in accordance with best practices and informed by public opinion research. Should the approver change or edit anything that could potentially affect accuracy, the approver will check in with those responsible for development. The responsible team will be informed of a final draft once approved.





# Keeping our water safe and abundant for generations to come



**For our  
health**



**For our  
economy**



**For our  
future**

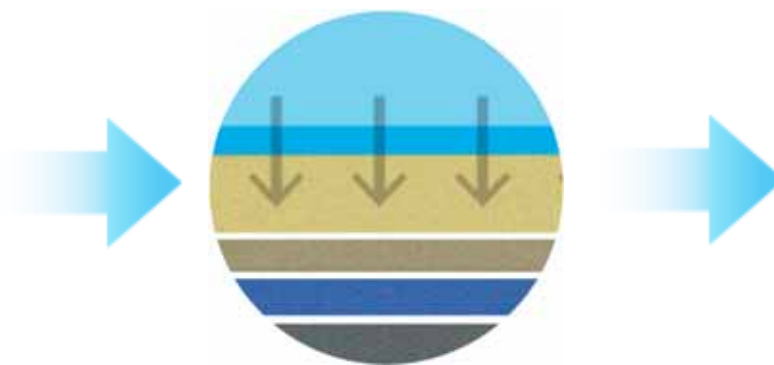


# For our health

*Making sure our water is safe for everyone*



Clean and safe water starts with the Bull Run Watershed



Filtration will remove *Cryptosporidium* and other potential contaminants



Improved corrosion control will further reduce the risk of lead exposure from home plumbing



# For our economy

*Creating jobs and investing in infrastructure to help our community thrive*



- \$100 million in contracts to Disadvantaged, Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, and Emerging Small Businesses
- More than 4,600 jobs and \$1.59 billion in total economic activity in the Portland metropolitan area.
- Annual operations spending will continue to support jobs and total local economic activity of \$14.9 million per year.

*Bull Run Treatment Projects Economic Contributions and Benefits Report (EcoNorthwest, June 2021)*



## For our economy

*Creating jobs and investing in infrastructure  
to help our community thrive*



Secured federal financing that  
**saves ratepayers \$247M+**







# For our future

*Providing a more resilient water system  
and greater protection*

**Allowing the Bull Run supply to  
be used after a fire**



Eagle Creek Fire (2017)

**Providing protection from  
disease-causing microorganisms**



Salem Algal Toxin Response (2018)

**Building new, seismically resilient  
infrastructure**



Portland Pipe Break

# Project Champions

## Tradeswomen building the future

Blog Post

Building water infrastructure like the Bull Run Treatment Project enables skilled tradeswomen to establish rewarding careers and contribute to improving the quality of life in our community.

Published: February 26, 2021 4:50 pm



Bull Run Treatment Project: For Our Future with Kelly Kupcak



Bull Run Treatment Project: For Our Economy

## Benefits for Our Economy

The investments we're making in the Bull Run Treatment Project create jobs today and will provide safe, reliable water infrastructure for our community members, businesses, and industries to thrive for generations to come.



Portland Water Bureau posted an episode of Bull Run Treatment Project: For Our Health 2020  
Published by Michele Wilkey · May 20 ·

We love beer, but we love water even more. Find out how we work with local brewers like Wayfinder Beer and Van Ebert Brewing to keep your beer flowing and delicious.



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## For Our Future

Generations of Portlanders will benefit from the long-term improvements we're making to enhance our water system's resilience, reduce future risks, and better protect our water.



## For Our Health with Darcey Ayala

As the Nurse Manager of the nephrology unit at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) Hospital, Darcey Ayala sees how important clean, safe water is for the treatment and overall health of her patients each and every day.



# Community Engagement & Communication



E-Newsletters with **3200+** Subscribers

**200k** Customer Bill Inserts and Water Quality Report



Project Videos Shared with **5k** Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram Subscribers



Project briefings for City Council, Portland Utility Board, cultural organizations, local tribes, watershed councils, neighboring water utilities, and more...

# Tribal nation and urban Indigenous outreach

- Reached out to eight Tribal nations
- Assessing Indigenous Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge (ITECK) opportunities for the project
- Started Urban Tribal Engagement Circle

*“I’m super excited and thankful for the opportunity to work with the Bull Run Filtration project team... they are working to build genuine relationships and support the goals of Indigenous community members. The implications of what could emerge from this work is inspiring.”*

— Serina Fast Horse, Kimimela Consulting





# Community Engagement & Communication



Printed Newsletters and Postcards Mailed to **1500+**  
Project Neighbors

Public Forums and Information Sessions

Monthly Site Advisory Group Meetings



In-Person and Online Open House



## **Polling Question #2**

**How familiar are you with the Good Neighbor Agreement?**

- a) I have used a Good Neighbor Agreement on a project.
- b) I am familiar with a Good Neighbor Agreement but have never used one.
- c) I have never heard of a Good Neighbor Agreement
- d) Why in the world would we want to interact with neighbors?

# Developed Good Neighbor Agreement with input from facility neighbors

Bull Run Filtration   
Good Neighbor Agreement

Steps we're taking to:

- Design a filtration facility that adapts to the community
- Minimize impacts during construction
- Continue to be a good neighbor once the facility is operating
- Keep neighbors informed



*Joint Water Commission facility tour with Site Advisors and other community members*

# Communications Framework

- Use public opinion to **set a baseline and evaluate progress**
- **Identify and evaluate**
  - Audiences
  - Opportunities
  - Challenges
- **Implement strategies and messaging**

# Communications Strategies for Customers and Water Filtration Facility Neighbors

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Project Communications  
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503-865-6039

Project webpage  
[portlandoregon.gov/bullrunprojects](http://portlandoregon.gov/bullrunprojects)

Project e-news:  
[portland.gov/B RTPnews](http://portland.gov/B RTPnews)

**One last video...**



# Polling Question #1

**A communications framework should include:**

- a) An understanding of our stakeholders' perceptions
- b) Potential challenges and opportunities
- c) Key messaging
- d) All of the above

## **Polling Question #2**

**What do you think a Good Neighbor Agreement is:**

- a) A list of promises an agency makes to project neighbors.
- b) A tool for having a conversation about concerns and expectations.
- c) Design details on landscaping, lighting, and sound mitigation strategies.
- d) Any list of commitments signed by an agency and project neighbors.